

## Headlines:

- **Malaysia's National Security Act**
- **US Intervention in Libya continues**
- **Chemical Attacks in Syria**

## Details:

### Malaysia's National Security Act

The National Security Council Act was pushed through parliament in December by the government of Prime Minister Najib Razak, coming into effect on the 1st of August 2016. The controversial law allows search and arrests without warrants, property seizures and bans on demonstrations. Critics accused Najib and his government of enacting the law, and other tough recent legislation, to ward off political and legal challenges. With many accusing him of using the political climate to solidify his own position, which has come under threat due to the corruption scandal allegations. Last week, the US Justice Department launched a move to seize more than \$1bn in assets it says were purchased with money stolen from 1MDB, a scandal involving Najib and members of his party. The US move has heightened expectations of further anti-Najib protests in Malaysia, but there are concerns the security law could be used to prevent them. However the need to solidify and consolidate ones power is nothing new to secular politics, as the role fulfilled does not require the individual to manage the affairs of the people. Politics is viewed as a career and an individual must do all it takes to reach the peak. Najib is doing the same, the consolidation of power in order to prevent his career from being derailed. The problem with Malaysia is not Najib but rather the democratic system of which Najib is a symptom of the problem.

### US Intervention in Libya continues

The US government announced on 1st August their decision to launch airstrikes in Libya to battle ISIS. This is part of a wider strategy to restrict ISIS with the declared aim to bring a solution to the internal issues in Libya. The reality is that just like Iraq and Syria, ISIS has been used by the US to ensure its presence in the region to ensure stability. Libya since the fall of Gaddafi has been marred by conflict spurred on by two governmental entities. It is clear with recent leaks and reports on the ground that the US seeks to obtain control over Libya from European powers. It is in this context that the US has supported certain groups and individuals within Libya and has used ISIS, similar to other places around the Middle East to lengthen the conflict to weaken its opposition and ensure a firm hold on the situation in Libya.

### Chemical Attacks in Syria

Two separate poison gas attacks have been reported in northern Syria on 2 August 2016, in the Idlib and Aleppo Provinces. Helicopters dropped containers of toxic gas a rescue service operating in rebel-held territory said Raed Saleh, head of the Syrian Civil Defense group, told Al Jazeera that 33 civilians, including 18 women and 10 children, were brought to a local hospital after the attack in the town of Saraqeb. "Just before midnight, helicopters dropped five explosive barrels containing cylinders of chlorine and shards of metal on neighbourhoods in Saraqeb," he said. "We suspect it was chlorine because of the smell and the nature of the injuries - suffocation and burning, red eyes. Members of the civil defense brought them all to the nearby hospital." This is not the first use chemical weapons by the al-Assad regime and with the battle for Aleppo reaching its moment of reckoning more atrocities are expected.